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Medical examiner plans

By EARL GOLZ
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Dallas County's chief medical examiner, bolstered by consent from the former wife of the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, has agreed to exhume the body of Lee Harvey Oswald from his grave in Fort Worth, *The Dallas Morning News* learned Wednesday.

Dr. Charles Petty has proposed an exhumation for Friday and hopes to determine whether the body is Oswald's within hours after the body has been removed from the grave, sources said.

Petty, who sources said planned to make the announcement after the exhumation and tests were complete, would neither confirm nor deny the report Wednesday.

The question of the identity of the body buried in 1963 in Rose Hill Cemetery in Fort Worth's Far East Side

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to exhume Oswald

was first raised publicly five years ago by Michael Eddowes, a British author and attorney.

Eddowes suspects the assassin was not Oswald but a Soviet secret agent who returned to this country from Russia in 1962 as a "sleeper" posing as Oswald.

Oswald had defected to Russia in 1959 and claimed he would reveal highly classified information about this country's U-2 spy plane. Oswald, a former U.S. Marine, was stationed at Atsugi Air Base in Japan, from where the plane flew high-altitude missions over Russia. Marina Oswald, a Russian native, bore her husband a child before the couple came to the United States to live in 1962.

The exhumation plans, shrouded in secrecy, would require only an order signed by Petty and a consent form signed by the former Marina

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Oswald, now Mrs. Kenneth Porter of Rockwall, Texas.

A source said Mrs. Porter, who could not be reached for comment Wednesday, signed the consent decree, which would eliminate any liability for Dallas County officials.

Neither the Warren Commission nor the House Assassinations Committee, which concluded in 1979 that a conspiracy probably resulted in Kennedy's assassination, ever seriously considered the impostor theory.

The chief counsel for the committee, G. Robert Blakey, has ridiculed Eddowes' efforts to exhume the body.

But the forensic anthropologist, whose study of photographic evidence led to the house committee's rejection of the impostor theory, told *The News* last February he could "not totally exclude a remote possibility" of an Oswald look-alike.

Dr. Clyde C. Snow said an exhumation "would be of interest and it could probably from the records we have now . . . put it (the question of an impostor) to bed one way or another."

Petty has vacillated on the exhumation issue, at first proposing it last year and then rejecting the idea several months ago — reportedly because of the liability problem.

Eddowes filed a civil suit in Fort Worth state court in January 1979, but the judge ruled he had no standing because he is an English citizen. The Fort Worth Court of Civil Appeals upheld that ruling May 15.

A key to determing whether the body is Oswald's are the dental X-rays taken in 1958 when he was a Marine. Petty's office has obtained the dental chart for a comparison of the teeth in the body, which would be taken to his office in Dallas.

Eddowes also has said the body measured in Dallas in 1963 by then-chief medical examiner Dr. Earl Rose was two inches shorter than the 24-year-old Oswald's height measured during his tour of duty with the Marines.

Rose, who was invited to come to Dallas from his teaching position at the University of Iowa to participate in the exhumation, declined to say Wednesday whether he would do so.

In his autopsy report, Rose failed to mention any remnant of a mastoidectomy scar behind the left ear of Oswald that resulted from an operation when he was a small boy.

The mortician who hermetically sealed the body in a steel reinforced concrete vault 16 years ago told *The News* last October that it would be "just like it was when I put it in there."

Paul J. Groody said he "overembalmed" the body and placed it in a 2,700-pound vault "because I knew good and well they may want to take a good look at him again."

The man authorities identified as Oswald was shot to death in the Dallas City Hall basement by Dallas nightclub operator Jack Ruby two days after Kennedy was assassinated.